

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 are pending in this application, of which claims 1-3 and 7-9 have been amended. No new claims have been added.

The Abstract, specification and claims 1-3 and 7-9 have been amended to correct various instances of indefiniteness. No new matter has been added, and the 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, rejection of claims 1-12 as indefinite should be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 2, 7 and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent 2,956,823 to Benjamin et al. (hereinafter "**Benjamin et al.**").

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Benjamin et al. disclose an expansion joint for piping.

Fig. 4 specifically shows parts 36, 37 flanged "as at 38 and 37 and one part 38 is rolled over the other part as at 40 so as to secure them together," as disclosed in column 3, lines 15-17.

Fig. 4 of **Benjamin et al.** fails to disclose any construction corresponding to either a "first stop ring (6) hitching to a peripheral face of the first pipe" or a "second stop ring (7) hitching to a peripheral face of the second pipe", as recited in claims 1, 2, 7 and 8 of the instant application.

The members (37) and (46) in Fig. 4 of **Benjamin et al.** merely form a groove to fill a seal member (45) into, and these members (37) and (46) do not fit onto or "bite" into the peripheral faces of the pipes, while the stop rings (6) and (7) of the present invention do perform such a function.

In contrast to this, in **Benjamin et al.**, the steps described below should be at least done to complete pipe connections: a part, such as an o-ring, is fitted at an end of a pipe; the end of the pipe is flared; and another pipe and a part are welded. These operations are labor intensive and increase the workload at the jobsite.

Thus, the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejection should be withdrawn.

The Examiner has not applied any prior art to reject claims 3-6 or 9-12. Therefore, Applicants assume these claims would be allowed if rewritten to overcome the 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, rejection and if amended to be in independent form. Applicants respectfully defer this action until a FINAL Office Action, if any, is received.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, claims 1-12, as amended, are in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is requested.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosures: Substitute Abstract of the Disclosure